

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: New Jersey	
COUNTY: Essex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME	
COMMON: The Old First Presbyterian Church	
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 820 Broad Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Newark			
STATE: New Jersey	CODE: 34	COUNTY: Essex	CODE: 013

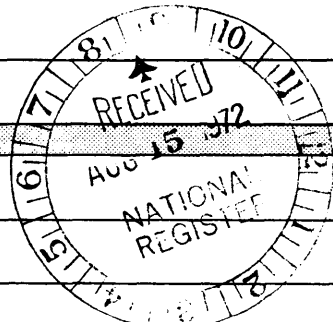
3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☐ Site ☐ Object ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered ☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
☐ Agricultural ☐ Commercial ☐ Educational ☐ Entertainment	☐ Government ☐ Industrial ☐ Military ☐ Museum	☐ Park ☐ Private Residence ☒ Religious ☐ Scientific	☐ Transportation ☐ Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Old First Presbyterian Church			
STREET AND NUMBER: 820 Broad Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Newark	STATE: New Jersey	CODE: 34	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Essex County Hall of Records			
STREET AND NUMBER: High Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Newark	STATE: New Jersey	CODE: 34	

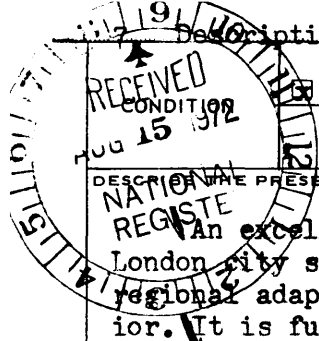
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey			
DATE OF SURVEY: ☒ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D.C.	CODE: 11	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: New Jersey	COUNTY: Essex	ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY



Description	
(Check One)	
☒ Excellent	☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed
(Check One)	
☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered
(Check One)	
☐ Moved	☒ Original Site
DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	
An excellent example of a Georgian-Colonial, center-steepled church, of London city scale, but intact as built in New Jersey in 1787-91, in local - regional adaptation utilizing local brownstone and great austerity of exterior. It is fully intact from the original exterior drawings. According to the Pastor, Reverend Dr. Alexander Mcwhorter, in 1801- "Its dimensions are 100 feet in length, including the steeple, which projects 8 feet, its width is 68 feet, and the height of the steeple is 20 1/2 feet." (various extensions to the side and the side-rear) The wooden steeple itself which represents about half the total tower-steeple height, has two tall octagonal stages, the upper smaller in circumference than the lower, below the shingle-roofed spire proper. Both of these stages have, uniformly, 8 round-arched windows with louvers, of which the lower stage is slightly more open and is presumably the bell chamber. The next level below the uppermost of four tall stages of brownstone tower-has a large four sided clock, the stage below it-a circular wood wheeled traceried window, then a pediment below that. The next level down-the second story- has a large round-headed window, with interwoven upper wood tracery forming delicate de-emphasized pointed pan shapes---(the two second story windows in the main facade flanking the tower being identical.) A tablet is set under the second story window directly above the round-headed main entrance of the first tower stage-at ground level. The double doors themselves are rectangular and painted white. The flanking side entrances in the main facade are similar to the main entrance. Additional tablets and plaques are on the facade's first level. Under the gambel roof on each side of the facade are beautiful wood-traceried oval-shaped windows, axis-oriented on a slant midway between horizontal (i.e. the nearby horizontal cornice atop the second story below) and the angle of slant of the uncorniced roof, above (weatherplated only, on the front wall). The flatter portion of the gambrel roof, on the front facade, is entirely hidden by the stone portion of the tower, but is visible easily from the rear. A major highlighting or outlining feature of all substantial components of the exterior is the employing of a more reddish, cut sandstone as trim around the entrances, windows, etc., and as corner quoins for the church and tower. The interior, while undergoing many refinements, is large-exceptional for its day-and richly treated with classical decor worthy of the finest Renaissance London city churches. The original "Venetian"(or "Palladian") window behind the pulpit has been eliminated in 1872 by a slight eastward chancel extension but the "Venetian-Palladian" effect has been echoed boldly by making the large center panel a rounded semi-domed apse, the side panels also being recesses. Side galleries are supported on fluted-columns set on square bases three to four feet above the floor. A richly deep coffered ceiling-classical and in multiple colors-is a highly ornate element. The gallery under-cornices and balustrades are also highly classical in decor. (cont.)	

SEMINAR INSTRUCTIONS

8 Significance

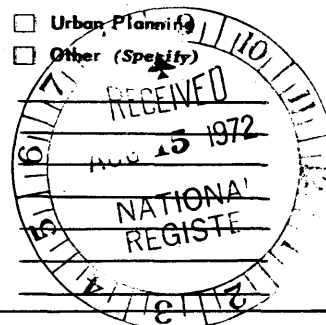
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☒ 18th Century ☒ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| ☐ Aboriginal | ☐ Education | ☐ Political | ☐ Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | ☐ Engineering | ☐ Religion/Philosophy | ☐ Other (Specify) |
| ☐ Historic | ☐ Industry | ☐ Science | |
| ☐ Agriculture | ☐ Invention | ☒ Sculpture | |
| ☒ Architecture | ☐ Landscape | ☐ Social/Humanitarian | |
| ☒ Art | ☐ Architecture | ☐ Theater | |
| ☐ Commerce | ☐ Literature | ☐ Transportation | |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Military | | |
| ☐ Conservation | ☒ Music | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old First Presbyterian Church is one of the most elect of historic churches in the United States. The congregation pre-dates the city of Newark itself. One of the early ministers of the Old First was Aaron Burr Sr. He held classes in the Newark Manse which were subsequently transferred to Princeton College.

The congregation was originally a portion of the Branford, Connecticut Colony of Puritans. Because of divergent beliefs many people left for Newark under the leadership of Major Robert Treat in 1666. Hence the church pre-dates the city of Newark.

During the time between the establishment of the congregation in Newark and the actual building of the Old First Presbyterian Church many famous personages belonged to the Church. Among these are included Aaron Burr Sr. (as mentioned above), Abraham Pierson Jr. and the first mayor of Newark, William Halsey.

The Old First Presbyterian Church was built under Dr. McWhorter who was pastor for 48 years from 1759 to 1807. There remains a drawing of the architect's original plans for the church but the name of the architect is still unsure. Several sources attribute the church to Eleazer Ball but it is not known whether he made the drawings or just supervised the construction. The name of Stephen Denfer is also mentioned but no real evidence can be found to document his name.

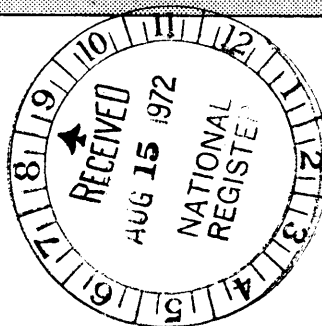
The construction of the church began in September, 1787 and the first services were held there on January 1, 1791. It has been said of the church that it is an "...excellent example of Georgian Colonial architecture. The freestone was quaried on Bloomfield Ave. and the mortar was made from piles of clam shells left by the Indians along the banks of Newark Bay. The gambrel roof behind the slender tower is a typical New Jersey touch."

Over the years there have been several minor changes to the interior such as the re-arranging of pews, the elimination of windows and a new roof. The maintenance and upkeep has been done with complete regard to architectural preservation.

For many years the Old First has been the mother church to many newly organized Presbyterian churches. Its own congregation has dwindled. For decades the Old First was noted for its fine German singing societies.(cont.)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic American Buildings Survey
New York Magazine, September, 1992
W.P.A. Federal Writers Guide, New Jersey



10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		40° 44' 02"	74° 10' 21"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:		Licensed "professional planner" and Architectural Historian	
Donald W. Geyer			
ORGANIZATION		DATE	
		October, 1971	
STREET AND NUMBER:			
351 Broad Street			
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE	CODE
Newark		New Jersey	34

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

Name

Richard J. Sullivan

Title

Commissioner, Department of
Environmental Protection

Date

August 2, 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert H. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

11/2/72

ATTEST:

William H. Hays
Keeper of The National Register

Date

10-3-72

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NPS Number Nov. 2, 1972

Title: Old First

Presbyterian Church

Loc. Essex Co., New Jersey

Frontal facade

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

SUBJECT: Old First Church (Pres.)

LOCALITY: Newark, N.J.

SOURCE: Donald W. Geyer

1971

Newark